

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 NIC-01 IO-12 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-11

COME-00 ACDA-19 MC-02 GAC-01 SAJ-01 CIEP-02 SCEM-02

RSR-01 /166 W

----- 053141

R 270830 Z MAR 73

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 236

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0153

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, UR

REF : BAGHDAD 140 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: SUDDEN VISIT MAR 21-24 OF RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN TO MOSCOW BELIEVED TO MARK LEVELING OFF OF GROWTH IN IRAQ OF SOVIET INFLUENCE AND PRESENCE, BUT " STRATEGIC ALLIANCE" WITH SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO BE CORNERSTONE IRAQ FOREIGN POLICY, ONE CAN, NEVERTHELESS DETECT SIGNS OF A NEW COOLNESS, PARTICULARLY ON PART LOCAL COMMUNISTS. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET COUNSELLOR TOLD ME SADDAM HUSSEIN' S VISIT HAD BEEN
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PLANNED FOR SOME TIME AND ONLY DIFFICULTY IN FIXING EXACT DATES HAD GIVEN IMPRESSION OF IT BEING HASTILY PREPARED. FRENCH CHARGE SAID FORMIN OFFICIAL IN MOSCOW HAD TOLD FRENCH EMBASSY THERE THAT VISIT WAS AT IRAQI INITIATIVE. DESPITE THIS, CONSENSUS OF WESTERN EMBASSIES IS THAT VISIT ARRANGED SUDDENLY AND AT SOVIET INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO SEEK IRAQI EXPLANATION OF ACCORD WITH IPC AND ITS FUTURE POLICIES.

3. WELL INFORMED DIPLOMATS, INCLUDING ALGERIA N, FRENCH AND ITALIANS, CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIETS WERE VERY DISTURBED WITH IPC SETTLEMENT EVEN THOUGH IN WEEKS PRIOR TO SIGNING THEY HAD TRIED TO SELL THEME THAT RUSSIAN ASSISTANCE HAD MADE FAVORABLE SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE AND THEY NOW ADVISING IRAQIS TO SIGN. VIEW THAT SOVIETS DISPLEASED SUPPORTED BY SECONDARY TREATMENT COMMUNIST WEEKLY AL- FIKR AL- JADID OF MAR 24 GAVE SADDAM' S TRIP WHILE OFFICIAL PRESS PLAYING IT AS VERY MAJOR EVENT. EVEN MORE REVEALING WAS ARTICLE IN SAME ISSUE WHICH, BY IRAQI STANDARDS, AMOUNTED TO STRONG ATTACK ON SETTLEMENT ON GROUNDS THAT IRAQ PAYING TOO MUCH COMPENSATION, IRAQ ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATION, COMPANIES REMAIN IN STRONG POSITION IN SOUTH, AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS WILL BE MADE BY FORMER IPC PARTNERS, ALL OF WHICH FIT IN WITH DESIGN OF WEST " TO STOP IRAQ' S PROGRESSIVE MARCH AND RUIN IRAQ' S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES PARTICULARLY USSR".

4. LESSER REASONS FOR SOVIET APPREHENSION ABOUT IRAQ COULD INCLUDE SMUGGLING OF SOVIET ARMS TO PAKISTAN, BORDER CLASHES WITH KUWAIT AND IRAN (IT IS PROBABLY NOT COINCIDENTAL THAT IRANIAN HELICOPTER CREW RETURNED (BAGHDAD 148) RIGHT AFTER SADDAM RETURNED), AND ALACRITY WITH WHICH IRAQ MOVED AFTER IPC SETTLEMENT TOWARD FULL RAPPROACHEMENT WITH EGYPT INCLUDING SEVEN MIL DOLLAR GRANT TO ARMED FORCES.

5. OTHER INDICATIONS OF COOLNESS CAN BE SEEN IN JOINT PRESS STATEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, EARLY IN VISIT SADDAM INVITED SOVIET LEADERS TO ATTEND FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF APR 9 SOVIET-IRAQI TREATY, BUT PRESS STATEMENT MADE NO MENTION OF ACCEPTANCE. PRESS STATEMENT ALSO MAKES NO MENTION OF ARAB GULF WHICH IS AT TOP OF IRAQ' S FOREIGN POLICY LIST.

6. ABOVE REPRESENTS PRELIMINARY COMMENTS BASED ONLY ON WHAT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN BAGHDAD ABOUT VISIT.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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